

# Frequently Asked Questions about the Tennessee Fire Incident Reporting System (TFIRS)

## **What is TFIRS?**

It's the Tennessee Fire Incident Reporting System, which collects data on fire incidents from local fire departments and forwards that information to NFIRS (the national system, managed by the US Fire Administration, a unit of the U S Department of Homeland Security).

## **Do we have to report to TFIRS?**

Yes. State law requires all Fire Departments to report all incidents of fire to the Fire Marshal's Office within ten days of the occurrence. TFIRS is the reporting mechanism for that. Also FEMA Fire Act Grant recipients are required to report to NFIRS for at least once year.

## **How do we report to TFIRS online?**

We recommend using the USFA NFIRS 5.0 software, which is offered free of charge through the NFIRS 5.0 web site at [www.nfirs.fema.gov/users](http://www.nfirs.fema.gov/users). Look for the heading User Section and click on the link User Registration to register. Use your FDID number as the user name.

You can download the program for free, or the TFIRS Coordinator will send it to you for free on a CD-ROM.

## **Where do I call if I need help on TFIRS?**

Your state NFIRS Program Manager is Dennis Mulder, TFIRS Coordinator, (615) 532-5753 or [dennis.mulder@state.tn.us](mailto:dennis.mulder@state.tn.us).

## **Can I use vendor software to send Fire Department and incident data to the National Database?**

Files from vendor software will be recognized by the National Database if the vendor has registered their software in accordance with USFA specifications. The USFA maintains a list of vendors with Active status. Contact the TFIRS Coordinator for more information before using vendor software.

## **What are the System Requirements for TFIRS?**

NFIRS 5.0 was designed to use the Internet to exchange and share data in a consolidated National database. Local, Metro, and State members of the fire community will file their reports into NFIRS National database over the Internet. Each time a user logs onto the National database, a check is made to ensure the user has the latest software version which includes bug fixes and enhancements.

System Requirement Minimums:

200 MHZ CPU Pentium Class

64 MB of RAM

20 MB available disk space

800 x 600 Monitor Resolutions

28.8 Kbps modem

## **How long does it take to download the NFIRS 5.0 software?**

Download time depends on the user's connection to the internet and the amount of traffic on the internet. Experience has shown that unless you have DSL or cable modem, the download time will take up to 6 hours (the file is 28.8 MB).

## **What is Microsoft Access 97 (or Access 2000, Access 2002 FoxPro 6.0, MS SQL Server 7.0 or 2000)?**

These are database programs. The NFIRS 5.0 application can use one of these programs as the database engine to manage and store the data entered in the Off-Line mode. If the user wishes to

work in the Off-Line mode, one of these programs must be installed on the PC. Access 97 and Access 2000 are used most often as the Off-line database engine. The database program must be installed prior to installing NFIRS 5.0 application. The Data Entry Validation Tool Guide and the Readme.txt provide complete details (<http://nfirs.fema.gov/users/usersdocs.shtm>).

## FAQ Chapter 2: Common problems

### **What do I do if I forget my password?**

Contact the TFIRS Coordinator.

### **How often do I have to change my password?**

The User will be prompted to change their password every ninety days.

Passwords can be changed prior to the 90 days. Select Change Password under the Advanced tab in the Data Entry Tool.

### **I cannot login On-Line. I am a registered user with an active password. I keep receiving the User Not Found ... Please Reenter message.**

Has it been more than 60 days since your last login? You must login at least once every 60 days or your account will be automatically de-activated. Are you entering TN. as the state? TN without a period is the correct user state.

### **How do I know if I am using the most current version of the USFA NFIRS 5.0 software?**

Your TFIRS Coordinator can assist in identifying if the version of the USFA software on the PC is the most current. The 5.0 in NFIRS 5.0 is a system number, which is followed by the Software Version number, for example: Version 5.0 Version 5.3.4. The Program File folder in the root directory will reflect the software version number, for example: NFIRSV53.

### **What is the difference between Off-Line and On-Line?**

Off-Line means the user is entering their incidents data into a Microsoft Access database on your computer. On-Line means the user enters the incident data directly into the National database while connected through the Internet.

### **How do I change from Off-line to On-line?**

Open the Configuration Tool and click on the Advanced Tab. Check the box for On-Line database. Click Save...OK...Exit. See Configuration Tool User's Guide for more information. It's available at <http://nfirs.fema.gov/users/usersdocs.shtm> .

### **I cannot login Off-Line. I keep receiving User Not Found...Please Reenter message.**

The user must complete a User Injection and Remote Synchronization before login Off-Line. Refer to Section 4.2.1 of the Data Entry Validation Tool Guide for instructions or to Section 3, Off-line Database Setup, for complete details(<http://nfirs.fema.gov/users/usersdocs.shtm>).

### **When I enter the Data Entry Tool, my FDID Number is correct but it says FDID not found.**

The name of your department has not been entered in the system. Click on Fire Dept from the Menu bar and click on New Department. Here you will enter the Fire Department's Name and information. Click OK and the department information will be saved and the department name will be displayed.

### **Can I enter my incidents Off-Line and then send them periodically to the National Database?**

Yes.

**How do I send my incidents to the National database?**

The User uses the Import/Export Tool which is located under the Tools tab in the Data Entry Tool. See Section 5.1 of the Data Entry Tool Guide for full details. It's available at <http://nfirs.fema.gov/users/usersdocs.shtm> . Departments using commercial software should use the Bulk Import Utility (BIU) to upload their data. Contact the Coordinator for more information.

**How can I tell if the incidents were sent successfully?**

Users may verify their incident data was sent successfully by logging in On-Line to the National database. Click on Incident from the Menu bar and then Open Incident. The Incident Search window will be displayed. Click on Search to search all incidents or narrow the search criteria by entering specific search requirements. BIU users will receive confirmation by email.

**Is the Data Entry/Validation Tool case sensitive?**

The Data Entry/Validation Tool is not case sensitive.

**What do the yellow fields represent?**

These are fields defined as National required fields. These fields must be completed in order for the incident to pass validation.

**If a call is cancelled en route, what Incident Type should I enter?**

Incident Type 611, "Dispatched and cancelled en route." An Actions Taken code of 93, cancelled en route, should also be entered. If you have questions about an individual incident and which codes to use to accurately report it, contact the TFIRS Coordinator.

**Can I print a copy of an incident?**

Yes, a Forms Based Incident Report (FBIR) can be generated and printed, one incident at a time, in either the On-line or Off-line mode. Refer to Section 4.2.5 of the Data Entry Tool Users' Guide for the complete instructions. An FBIRS or range of FBIRs may also be printed online at [www.nfirs.fema.gov/webtools/userservices/](http://www.nfirs.fema.gov/webtools/userservices/) . Contact the Coordinator for more information.

**Comments or questions on TFIRS?**

E-mail them to:

[dennis.mulder@state.tn.us](mailto:dennis.mulder@state.tn.us)